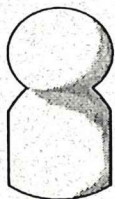


Faculty of Music

University of Toronto



Music with Friends

Chamber Music by
Gary Kulesha

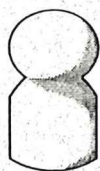


Faculty Artist Series

Monday, October 30, 1995

8 pm

Walter Hall
Edward Johnson Building



Music With Friends
Chamber Music by Gary Kulesha

Night Music (1987)

1. from "The Merchant of Venice"
text: William Shakespeare
2. "To Night"
text: Percy Shelley
3. "Night"
text: Lord Byron

Erika Tanner, soprano; Gary Kulesha, piano

Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1991)

1. Andante-Allegro Molto-Andante
2. Largo, con rubato
3. Allegro Molto

Mark Skazinetsky, violin; Shauna Rolston, cello;
Gary Kulesha, piano

INTERMISSION

"...and dark time flowed by her like a river..." (1994)

Shauna Rolston, cello; Stephen Clarke, piano

Mysterium Coniunctionis (1980)

Ray Luedeke, clarinet; David Bourque, bass clarinet;
Gary Kulesha, piano

Second Sonata for Piano (1980)

Stephen Clarke, piano

Night Music for Soprano and Piano

This is a cycle of 3 songs on texts by Shakespeare, Shelley, and Byron, who are all among my favourite writers. When I was in public school, it was assumed by all of my teachers that I would go on to become a poet of some sort. My close friends can attest to the importance that poetry has had for me throughout my life. I am always wary of setting truly great poetry, because it has always seemed unlikely to me that I can in any way add a dimension to it. Nevertheless, in this cycle, I arrogantly committed myself to setting three of my favourite poets.

From THE MERCHANT OF VENICE by William Shakespeare
Act V, Scene i

...Music! Hark!....

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit here with me. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.

There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
But in his motion sings like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.....

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.....

Peace!

TO NIGHT by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,--
 Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand--
 Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
 I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me?-- And I replied,
 No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon--
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night--
Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon!

NIGHT by Lord Byron

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellow'd and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darken'd Jura, whose cap heights appear
Precipitously steep: and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more...

.....

All heaven and earth are still-- though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:--
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concenter'd in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

.....

Thy sky is changed!-- and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

And this is the night:-- Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! Let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,--
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black;-- and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano

My Trio was written for the Rembrandt Trio, and was commissioned through the Ontario Arts Council.

The work is in three movements, fast-slow-fast. The three players are equal partners throughout, although each gets a solo at some point. The first movement opens with a slow introduction in which the basic material is presented, a sinuous descending melody accompanied by a major/minor chord. A very fast section follows, in which the tune is restated accompanied by high clusters in the piano. The entire movement continues to drive forward until the climax at the end, when the opening returns, upside-down.

The second movement is a cantabile, announced by the piano. This is followed by a section of "working-out" for the full trio. This in turn leads to a strange little passage of glissandi in the strings accompanied by simple fifths

in the piano, which then ends the movement with a restatement of the opening.

The finale is once again a driving allegro, built with ostinatos and a tune still based on the opening material of the work. There is a brief lyrical passage which leads to a climax, a statement of the opening tune in unison. This is followed by a reminiscence of the opening of the first movement. A short, electric coda completes the work.

This piece is, to me, obviously in C# Minor, with a slow movement in the traditionally related key of F# Minor. I doubt that this will be obvious to most people.

"...and dark time flowed by her like a river..."

This work was commissioned for the Eckhardt Gramatté Competition in 1994 by the Canada Council.

The title of this work is taken from novel by Thomas Wolfe called "The Web and the Rock," written in 1939. Wolfe's novel is a thinly disguised autobiographical account of his early adulthood. This particular line is from a passage in which he describes his central character's sudden deep recognition of the loss of each precious moment of time, an experience which happens to each of us at some point in our development. The work has no real programme, and the title is suggestive more of a mood than of a story. Certainly, the music is intended to be expressive and somewhat dark, reflecting the alternation of passion and philosophical despair that most sentient young people must pass through.

The piece is constructed in four sections, which flow into each other without interruption. The first section begins with a rhapsodic non-tonal statement of the basic idea. This is immediately followed by the same idea "straightened out" into simple G minor, but with a pointillistic atonal accompaniment. The language of the work flows between these two polarities, the clearly tonal centres tending to reflect a more philosophical point of view, and the atonal passages underlining the despair and passion of the work.

A series of pizzicato chords lead to the second section, a violent, arpeggio-based scherzo. The tortured quarter-tones of this section lead to the glissandi which introduce the third section, a cadenza for the solo instrument. The main idea returns harmonized in simple triads, settling deceptively onto a G major cadence before erupting into the agitated and very rhythmic finale.

Although my primary instrument is the piano, viola was my second instrument, and I have always thought of the solo string instruments as being my own "voice" among all the instruments. This has led me to write my most personal music for string and piano combinations.

Mysterium Coniunctionis for Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, and Piano

My "Mysterium" was written in the spring of 1980. The title is taken from a book by Carl Jung, whose work has been a profound influence on me both artistically and personally. This particular book is concerned with the art of alchemy as an allegory for the search for the self, and, by extension, the individual's search for truth. The title means "conjunction of mysteries," and both the book and my piece are about the unification of diverse elements, symbolically in alchemical process, but functionally within the human psyche.

There are five sections played without a break in this piece; each is concerned with a different stage in the alchemical process. The first section, "Materia Prima," presents the basic, raw materials. In this piece, these are a simple, four-note "tune" articulated immediately by the clarinet, and a series of four chords stated by the piano at the end of the first section-- D flat major, D minor, and their relative dominants, A flat major and A major. These materials provide the basis for the entire piece.

The second section, "Nigredo," represents the next stage in the process of refinement. "Nigredo" means "black," and at this point, the alchemist has heated the material sufficiently to begin to draw off all the basic impurities. The middle section is "Albedo," or "white," the first significant stage in the purification process. The fourth section is "Rosa Alba," which means "red stone." This is the penultimate part of the process, and excitement is high. Musically, we have moved through all the four basic triads, and have arrived at F major/minor, the note F being the shared note between the fundamental chords of D flat major and D minor.

The final section is totally and peacefully in F major, and is called "Philosopher's Stone." This is the ultimate stage in the alchemical process, and represents the achievement of inner psychic coherence and strength.

Second Sonata for Piano

This work was dated from 1980 and was commissioned by Christina Petrowska through the Ontario Arts Council. It was premiered by Larysa Kuzmenko in Edmonton in 1984. Larysa also played the Toronto premiere in 1987.

There is no subtext to this piece-- it is, pure and simple, a bravura work for solo piano. It is in three movements, the first of which is rather like a set of variations on the opening material. The second relies on related material in the form of triads, and is built almost like a passacaglia, with a static harmonic progression taking the place of a repeated theme. The finale is again built on the same material, and is a fairly traditional "toccata" for piano. The work contains several quotes from Liszt, although only dedicated performers of Liszt could possibly recognize them all.

Upcoming
Faculty Artist Series
Concerts:

Monday, November 13, 1995
8 pm

Jo-Anne Bentley, mezzo-soprano
William Aide, piano

Mahler, "Rückert Lieder"
Messiaen, "Trois Mélodies"
Barab, "Songs of Perfect Propriety"
and songs by Loewe, Bizet and Baksa

Monday, November 27
8 pm

The Meridian Ensemble
Keith Atkinson, oboe
Amy Hamilton, flute
Kent McWilliams, piano
& guest Thomas Wiebe, cello
play works by
Haydn, Moscheles, Martinu, Reizenstein and Carter

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